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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - MARCH 20, 2009

**1. (SBU) CROATIA MOVING AHEAD ON ITS DOMESTIC NATO
RATIFICATION PROCESS:**

The Government of Croatia held a session on March 18 that approved the draft legislation of Croatia's NATO accession protocols. According to the MFA, once the President's office is formally given the opportunity to comment on the draft, it is submitted to the Sabor. The Sabor is expected to vote on the draft later next week. See Zagreb 148 for more details. (PD'Amico)

2. (U) EMBASSY HOSTS AMERICAN CITIZENS INFORMATION NIGHT:
On March 17 the Consular Section organized the second annual American Citizens Information Night in the Embassy Atrium. More than 150 U.S. citizens, guest experts, and Embassy employees attended the event which offered consular services and information on a variety of topics. Croatian representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EU Integration, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, and the Bureau of Vital Statistics were available to answer questions on Croatian residency requirements, purchasing property, and obtaining Croatian civil documents. Other organizations such as AMCHAM, the Boy Scouts, the American International School, and the American College of Management and Technology of Dubrovnik were on hand to speak about their activities. Embassy offices included Consular, POL/ECON, Management, FCS, ODC, PD, the MSG, and the Zagreb Employee Association. The three hour event included welcoming remarks by Ambassador Bradtke, the Consular Chief, and the RSO. (PWingate)

**3. (SBU) HSLs GAMBIT IN BJELOVAR AIMS TO PRESERVE PARTY
STRONGHOLD:**
Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLs) Djudja Adlesic leaked to local media last week that her party*with two seats in the Sabor*was considering leaving the coalition government if they did not get more support from the Prime Minister,s Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). Press commentaries quickly concluded this was a pressure tactic to get the HDZ to support the HSLs,s mayoral candidate in Bjelovar. Our meetings with HSLs officials on March 11 support this explanation. The HSLs, a small party in decline for several years, is keenly focused on maintaining the mayorship in its two strongholds*Varazdin and Bjelovar. Adlesic, a former mayor of Bjelovar, is hoping her gambit to leave the government will spur the HDZ to support the HSLs candidate. (DMeges)

4. (U) GREEN ARCHITECTURE DVC AT AMERICAN CORNER ZAGREB:
Dr. Eric Pallant of Allegheny College addressed an audience of 50 at the American Corner in Zagreb, discussing the latest trends in green architecture. The core audience included the AmCham's Environmental Committee, the City of Zagreb's Green Building Council (of which the Embassy is a member), the University of Zagreb, and the Croatian Association of Architects. Beyond introducing innovative environmental practices, the event will generate future exchanges of ideas

among Croatian participants and Allegheny College. (KWetzel)

15. (U) CITY MAY FUND PROPOSED THOMPSON CONCERT:

Media reported this week that the city of Zagreb may fund a concert by controversial nationalist singer Marko Perkovic Thompson in the city's main square. The concert would take place at the end of May to mark Veteran's Day and would cost the city approximately 70,000 USD. A similar concert, also paid for by the city, was held last year at the same time drawing much criticism. Thompson's critics accuse him of glorifying the fascist Ustasha regime that ruled Croatia during WWII and inciting anti-Serbian sentiment. The main opposition leader, Zoran Milanovic, criticized the possible funding of the concert saying that while the concert should not be banned neither should it receive city funds (MJelenc)

16. (U) CROATIAN COMPANIES TO CONSTRUCT MOTORWAY IN MONTENEGRO:

A consortium consisting of three Croatian civil engineering companies, Konstruktor, IGH, and Tehnika d.d., has won the public tender for the construction of the Bar-Boljara motorway in Montenegro. This is the largest project Croatian companies have won since independence in 1991. The consortium, headed by Konstruktor, managed to outbid the Greek civil engineering consortium headed by Aktor Concessions. The 169.2 km-long highway is valued at 3 billion EUR. The project includes 42 tunnels and 92 bridges and viaducts and will employ approximately 6000 workers. The consortium will also have a 30 year concession for maintaining the highway once the project is finished. (DMatijas)

17. (U) JFDP REGIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN ZAGREB:

From March 12-15, 25 alumni of the Junior Faculty Development

ZAGREB 00000154 002 OF 002

Program (JFDP) from Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, and Albania participated in an alumni-planned and organized conference looking at the latest in teaching techniques. Up and coming professors representing a variety of disciplines shared ideas from their U.S. exchanges and academic experience. The embassy hosted a reception to welcome the group. (KWetzel)

18. (U) MULTIPLE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY EVENTS IN GOSPIC:

On a trip organized by the Information Resource Center (IRC), the APAO, the Ambassador's OMS, and the President of the Sabre Foundation of Zagreb visited the small city of Gospic which is struggling to overcome the economic effects of the war. While Carol Bryan, the Ambassador's OMS, presented a slide show and lecture on her Foreign Service Career at a high school the APAO gave a talk on Abraham Lincoln at the technical college. In coordination with the Sabre Foundation, the Embassy arranged book donations at the Gospic Public Library and at the technical college. The group also met with the curator of the regional museum. The visit was greatly appreciated in Gospic, a city which faces economic challenges and receives few international visitors. (KWetzel)
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